

1. An apparatus for automatically populating an interactive messaging contact list, the apparatus comprising:
 - a retrieval module configured to retrieve contact information corresponding to online users from a plurality of contact sources associated with a user including at least one electronic address book;
 - a validation module configured to validate the contact information on a messaging server to provide validated contact information; and
 - an insertion module configured to add the validated contact information to an interactive messaging contact list.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the retrieval module is further configured to search storage devices and other data repositories for a known address book format.
3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the known address book format is selected from the group consisting of a Lotus Notes format, an Eudora Mail format, and a Microsoft Outlook format.
4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the retrieval module is further configured to extract contact information by parsing an email address retrieved from the data sources.
5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the retrieval module is further configured to extract contact information by parsing a first and last name retrieved from the data sources.
6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the retrieval module is further configured to prompt a user to resolve conflicts in contact information.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the insertion module is further configured to enable a user to selectively insert contacts into the interactive messaging contact list.

8. A method for automatically populating an interactive messaging contact list, the method comprising:

retrieving contact information corresponding to online users associated with a user from a plurality of contact sources including at least one electronic address book;

validating the contact information on a messaging server to provide validated contact information; and

adding the validated contact information to an interactive messaging contact list.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising searching storage devices and other data repositories for a known address book format.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the known address book format is selected from the group consisting of a Lotus Notes format, an Eudora Mail format, and a Microsoft Outlook format.

11. The method of claim 8, further comprising parsing the contact information.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein parsing the contact information comprises resolving a first and last name.

13. The method of claim 8, further comprising prompting a user to resolve conflicts in the contact information.

14. The method of claim 8, further comprising enabling a user to selectively insert contacts into the interactive messaging contact list.

15. The method of claim 8, further comprising generating a confirmation request for an inserted contact.

16. An apparatus for automatically populating an interactive messaging contact list, the apparatus comprising:

means for retrieving contact information corresponding to online users associated with a user from a plurality of contact sources including at least one electronic address book;

means for validating the contact information on a messaging server to provide validated contact information; and

means for adding the validated contact information to an interactive messaging contact list.

17. A system for automatically populating an interactive messaging contact list, the system comprising:

a client computer configured to retrieve contact information corresponding to online users associated with a user from a plurality of contact sources including at least one electronic address book;

a messaging server configured to validate the contact information; and

the client computer further configured to add the validated contact information to an interactive messaging contact list.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the client computer is further configured to prompt a user to resolve conflicts in contact information.

19. The system of claim 17, wherein the client computer is further configured to enable a user selectively insert contacts into the interactive messaging contact list.

20. A computer readable storage medium comprising computer readable program code configured to carry out a method for automatically populating an interactive messaging contact list, the method comprising:

retrieving contact information corresponding to online users associated with a user from a plurality of contact sources including at least one electronic address book;

validating the contact information on a messaging server to provide validated contact information; and

adding the validated contact information to an interactive messaging contact list.

21. The computer readable storage medium of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises prompting a user to resolve conflicts in contact information.

22. The computer readable storage medium of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises enabling a user to selectively insert contacts into the interactive messaging contact list.

23. The computer readable storage medium of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises generating a confirmation request for an inserted contact.